Trade Union Policies *and* Tactics

AN OUTLINE

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FOREWORD

The growth and importance of the American Labor Movement depends on the intelligence and understanding of its members as to its aims, problems and policies. In this, the trade union is essentially a democratic institution. Each member is a full fledged citizen, having a voice and a vote in its councils. No program of a union, no matter how constructive and far-sighted can succeed unless the rank and file understands it and supports it. So the union is effected by its individual members.

To what extent this last is true can only really be seen when we notice how, more and more, the union is becoming the workers' institution—a medium through which he functions socially, economically and politically.

When the extent of this mutual reliance is clear, it becomes fully apparent that the condition of the worker entirely depends on the strength and influence of the union with which his interests are so closely bound. It is inevitable, therefore, that the further development of the labor movement will depend upon the sum of industrial and historical knowledge that the organized workers collectively possess. From the sum of this knowledge, the worker learns what methods, applied by his union, worked to his advantage and what policies resulted in his defeats. Therefore, he can help to shape the future policies of his union on this basis of past experience. If the workers understand the history of the labor movement and if they know the details of the various attempts made by previous generations to change our economic and political systems, they will have a basis for the understanding of present day conditions.

This and other considerations influenced the publication of Mr. Saposs' outline. The importance of the outline, however, rests very largely upon the method by which it came into being. The author prepared it as a syllabus for his class in "Trade Union Policies and Tactics," given in the Workers' University of the Internatonal Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. Over a period of several years the outline was continually revised by Mr. Saposs. In this revision, he was following the general policy of the Workers' University—that the contribution made by students in the classroom discussions should be incorporated into the body of the course. The result, in this case, is a pamphlet in which scholarly research is enriched by the daily experience of the workers. Because of the unique way in which this outline came into being, we can recommend it to all workers as well as to others who are eager for a practical as well as a scholarly understanding of the American Labor Movement.

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A list of references has been added to each section of the syllabus. These will refer the reader to more detailed sources of information about our Labor Movement.

It is, likewise, a part of the method followed by the instructors in the classes of our Educational Department, to prepare complete outlines of each lesson during a course. Copies of these are given to the students. During the lesson the class follows the outline, making only necessary notes. At the end of the term, each student has in his possession a complete syllabus of the entire course—one which is sufficiently valuable to be preserved for reference and as a foundation for further study of the subject.

F. M. C.

New York City
April, 1928

A Course in Trade Union Policies and Tactics

Given in the
Workers' University
International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union

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The work of the Educational Department of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union is based on a conviction that the aims and aspirations of the workers can be realized only through their own efforts in the economic and educational fields. While organization gives them power, education gives them the ability to use that power intelligently and effectively.

The education offered is planned to accomplish this aim. While some of it is intended to satisfy the intellectual and the emotional needs of workers, the main emphasis is laid on what meets their practical needs. The problems of the labor movement are analyzed and clarified by the study of general principles underlying them. In this way it is possible to train fresh energy, new experience and power for the service of the International and of the entire Labor Movement of America, and to help our members to achieve their purposes with the ultimate goal of living a full, rich and happy life.

Introduction

THE labor movement is undergoing a most intensive self-analysis. Changing conditions brought on by the war have upset traditions and old conceptions. New problems have to be coped with.

All social movements and organizations, including labor, find themselves forced to readapt their organizations, policies and tactics to meet these new conditions. The readaptations which labor is called upon to make in view of the changing conditions is a direct outgrowth of the role it aspires to play in the readjustment of modern civilization. Because labor's influence in the course of this social transition has been assuming larger proportions it finds itself confronted with many new problems. Consequently, the atmosphere in labor circles is surcharged with discussion of aims, policies and tactics that will best serve labor in fulfilling its historic mission. During such critical periods it behooves all thoughtful participants to re-appraise the past accomplishments of labor and gauge its future possibilities, in order to more intelligently determine on a mode of procedure that will enable it to realize its objective.

Those who interest themselves in the future of the labor movement should understand the underlying forces that mold and direct trade union policies They should know the part tradition, social ideals, leaders and members contribute in determining what course a labor organization should pursue. Similarly, they should understand the extent to which technical and industrial development of the trade or industry, and the nature of markets influence tactics and policies. Other forces must also be considered like strength of the union, strength of the entire labor movement, strength of the capitalist class, and the attitude and temper of the public.

Trade unionists who aim to serve the labor movement must know the relation of each unit in the movement, as well as the functions each is performing. They should be familiar with attempts to reform and transform the present labor movement and with what success those undertakings met. Likewise, they must know what can be expected from the auxiliary branches of the movement, like the labor press, co-operation, political action, and so on.

The active trade unionist is inevitably preoccupied with the pressing daily problems of his own organization so that he has little opportunity to keep abreast of developments in the labor world. It is hoped that this brief course of lessons may serve as an aid for stock taking by reviewing the historic as well as current trade union thought and practice with reference to fundamental policies and practices.

1. UNDERLYING FORCES OF TRADE UNION POLICIES

I.

1. While the study of trade union policies and tactics has not been reduced to a science, nevertheless, it is possible to indicate certain fairly defined forces that influence principles, tactics and policies.

2. No intelligent approach to trade union problems can be made without a knowledge of these forces which are an outgrowth of the interplay of economic, social, psychological, political, technical and personal factors.

3. Under different circumstances these forces manifest themselves in different combinations, so that at one time one or several may predominate, while at another time a different combination may prevail. Bearing this warning in mind, it is safe to describe and characterize the most important ones.

II.

1. The development of national markets and avenues of communication has made it necessary for unions to organize on national rather than local and sectional lines.

2. Technical and industrial development made it possible to carry on production with semi-skilled and unskilled workers, as well as in large scale and trustified plants, and has therefore forced many unions to abandon strictly craft lines and to either amalgamate or federate into department and other intercraft alliances.

3. The rapidity with which unions adapt themselves to new conditions depends largely upon the personality of the leaders and the understanding which the rank and file has of the problems confronting them. Traditions and social ideals of members and leaders will determine whether a union is militant or cowardly, conservative, liberal or radical. An articulate and intelligent membership can force its leaders to follow certain policies and tactics. On the other hand, shrewd and calculating leaders can frustrate the wishes of the rank and file. Where the membership is wholly unacquainted with social and political philosophies, the leaders naturally dictate the outlook and activities of the union at will.

4. Likewise, the financial and numerical strength of a union will decide whether it can extend its activities beyond merely organizing shops which are owned by friendly employers, or by employers operating on a small scale and consequently financially so situated that they are unable to fight even a weak union.

5. Strong unions are sometimes baffled in extending their activities, because of the incapacity of their leaders to cope with the problems which attend an organizing campaign in large scale and trustified plants. Often, powerful employers' associations can withstand all attempts to organize their workers. The metal

trades are notoriously "open shop", and also boast of the most powerful employers' associations.

III.

In no instance can one force be abstracted and used to explain the complicated social phenomena which affect trade union policies and tactics, but a close scrutiny of any situation will generally reveal that some or all of the above described forces enter into it.

2. INDUSTRIAL EVOLUTION AND THE ORIGIN OF THE WORKING CLASS

I.

a. To understand how capitalism functions, the beginnings of the working class and the policies and tactics of unions, it is necessary to understand industrial evolution and how the present capitalist system developed.

b. Other social forces like tradition, custom, institutions, leadership have also left their mark on the development of capitalism and the labor movement; the economic factors, however are the most important.

II.

These econoic forces may be divided into three great categories. But this is done in order to better understand their various ramifications. It must be borne in mind, however, that they are interdependent and operate simultaneously.

III.

a. The first of these great economic forces explains industrial evolution according to the manner in which man produces. It is the theory made famous by Marx and Engles and is known as the Production Theory, or the theory that explains industrial evolution on the lines of technical development.

b. Without technical improvements the modern factory system would not have been possible. It is the lack of technical improvements that has made it possible in the needle trades to produce wearing apparel in sweat-shops and contract shops with their innumerable and baffling evils.

IV.

a. The second of these great economic forces explains industrial evolution by the markets in which man sells that which he produces. It is known as the market theory.

b. According to the Market Theory:

1. Man first produced to satisfy his own wants.

2. Later as towns grew up, people began to specialize and produce only a certain product which they now sold in order to get money to buy the commodities they needed;
3. With the building of roads, canals, steamships and railroads, the area in which the manufactured goods was sold, expanded first throughout the nation and then throughout the world, so that now we have world markets.

c. This expansion of markets has affected the tactics of organized labor. Trade agreements are made on the basis of markets; hence a separate agreement is made with the dress and waist employers to cover that market, and the same is true of the cloak and suit market.

d. The boycott and the union label are means through which labor attempts to exercise its influence in the control of markets.

1. Through the boycott, labor withholds patronage from unfair employers.
2. Through the union label, labor bestows patronage upon fair employers.

V.

a. The third of these great theories explains industrial evolution according to the manner in which man sells the results of his labor. This is known as the Bargaining Theory, and is concerned with the question: with whom does the worker or producer strike the bargain for the work he performs?

b. In the early history of industry the worker produced directly for the customer or consumer, so that there were no middle-men between the worker and the consumer. Later the retail merchant stepped in between the worker and the consumer, so that the worker no longer sold his product to the consumer but worked for the retail merchant. Following this, we have the wholesale merchant and the manufacturer for whom the worker produced, and who sold to the retail merchant, who in turn sold to the consumer.

c. This separation of the worker from the consumer has made it possible for the capitalist to exploit both the worker and the consumer, and forced the workers to organize into unions.

VI.

a. It was this development of factory production, national and world markets, and the middle man or capitalist, which made it impossible for the worker to sell direct to the consumer that brought about modern capitalism and a permanent working class.

b. Modern capitalism is, therefore, an outgrowth of large scale production and national and world markets. These entail

huge amounts of capital and therefore make it impossible for the ordinary worker to own his little shop and sell direct to the customer.

c. Large scale business and exploitation of national and world markets is made possible by concentration of capital and credit in the hands of banks and great financial institutions. The key to modern capitalism, therefore, is credit control. Those who control credit, dominate industry and commerce and thereby dominate all society.

d. This explains the labor bank movement that is spreading throughout the country, producers' and consumers' cooperation and nationalization of industry.

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3. ECONOMIC ATTEMPTS TO CHANGE PRESENT SYSTEM

I.

a. It is erroneously supposed that the strike is the only form of direct or economic action.

b. Hence those radicals who are opposed to political action advocate the general strike as the means of changing the capitalistic system.

II.

a. The history of the labor movement reveals that organized labor has resorted to other forms of direct or economic action to abolish the wage system.

b. These forms are as old as the labor movement and have reappeared from time to time.

III.

a. At one time in the labor movement there was an influential element which believed that the most ideal system would be a return to domestic economy, in which industry is subordinated to agriculture.

c. In the thirties Robert Owen and many of his followers founded New Harmony in Indiana, a colony based on agriculture and operated on non-capitalistic lines.

d. During the forties and fifties, Albert Brisbane, father of Arthur Brisbane, and known as the first American Socialist, introduced Fourierism into this country, and many agricultural colonies known as Phalanxes, were founded.

e. During the nineties, this movement received new en-

couragement and many Socialists organized colonies in the West and South, some of which are still in existence.

f. While these colonies have enabled a select number of persons to forsake city and industrial life and live in the country on agricultural pursuits, they have not made any headway in supplanting the capitalist system.

IV.

a. When industry was still primitive and the capitalist system in its infancy, groups in the labor movement thought they could control capitalism through the cooperative marketing of their products.

b. This was the period of handicraft production, when each worker still owned his tools and worked in his home or little shop.

c. His problem was to dispose of his product to the consumer. Between him and the consumer stood the middleman or merchant who forced the worker to divide the profits with him, for the privilege of selling his wares.

d. This is still the predicament of the farmer, who is therefore still interested in cooperative marketing, government ownership of warehouses and railroads, which will enable him to market his own products without the intervention of the middleman.

V.

a. When the factory system superseded the handicraft mode of production, the worker no longer had sufficient capital to individually own the means of production and the necessary raw materials.

b. Hence, when workers became determined to replace capitalism, they turned to cooperative production or collective ownership of the means of production by the workers of the shop.

c. This was the ideal of the self-governing shop, in which every worker was an equal owner with his fellow workers of the shop in which they worked.

VI.

a. Another group felt that this form of producers' cooperation merely made small capitalists out of individual workers.

b. They advocated that cooperative shops should be founded and governed by all the workers of the industry through their unions. That is, the union, on behalf of the workers, should own cooperative shops and thus abolish capitalism.

c. The Knights of Labor actually bought a mine on this basis, but because of disagreement among the leaders and members, were forced to give it up.

VII.

a. Another group of workers argued that he who controls markets, controls production and dominates the capitalist sys-

tem. Therefore, those who wish to capture the system must concentrate on first capturing the markets.

b. They also argued, that the consuming function of man is more vital than the producing function, and that therefore industrial society and life should be controlled from the consumption end.

c. According to this theory, labor should concentrate upon consumers' cooperation. In this way workers can capture the markets and then take over the factories producing for these markets.

d. The classic example of the success of this procedure is the cooperative movement of England which started as consumers' cooperation and now owns factories, plantations, steamships, etc.

e. Those who believe in producers' cooperation and Guild Socialism, hold that the producer function is the most vital and industrial life should be controlled from that end.

VIII.

a. Another group also endorses the belief that labor should emancipate itself through economic action and asserts that credit control is the only key to modern capitalism.

b. This element bases its contention on the ground that banks and great financiers dominate modern business and that labor must first organize its own banks and then after controlling credit, will branch out into controlling production and markets. By controlling credit, the other two basic economic activities will also be controlled.

c. This idea of credit control and labor banks was first broached in the forties. Some unsuccessful attempts were even made to launch labor banks.

d. But for various reasons, the radical and reform elements in the labor movement lost sight of this angle and busied themselves with attempting to capture production and markets.

e. Only recently has the labor movement again taken up credit control and labor banks, which are now cropping out throughout the country.

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4. POLITICAL ATTEMPTS TO CHANGE PRESENT SYSTEM

I.

1. No vital social movement which functions in a society governed by political institutions can escape politics.
2. Hence, from its very inception, Labor in the United States was keenly interested in politics.
3. The first Labor Movement in the country, in 1827, although organized for trade union and economic action, was suddenly thrown into the throes of politics.

II.

1. Thereafter the Labor Movement fluctuated periodically between political and economic action.
2. During prosperity and high prices, workers would organize into unions in order to protect their standard of living and otherwise to better their working conditions.
3. With the return of depression and unemployment, workers invariably abandoned their unions for political action.
4. This tendency was chronic up to the '90s, and was the result of unstable economic conditions of the country.

III.

1. The political demands of the workers during the early history of the Labor Movement consisted of:
   a. Legislative demands furthering their interests as workers;
   b. Laws that would enable them to become property owners and small producers.
2. The philosophy underlying these political movements was a middle class one, based upon harmony of Capital and Labor, and upon the introduction of a society of small manufacturers, merchants, and farmers.
3. As a result of these political manifestations, we have the present public school system, mechanic's lien laws, homestead law, laws prohibiting imprisonment for debt.

IV.

1. In the early '60s and late '70s, the German immigrant workers brought Socialism to this country, with its class consciousness.
2. They organized their own unions and political clubs, based on the Socialist philosophy.
3. At the same time they also set out to convert the American workers. But the latter persistently adhered to middle class philosophies.
4. For each element had its own political party, and efforts at reconciliation proved futile.

V.

1. In the meantime, because of the failures of political action and its encroachments upon the unions, an element developed that was opposed to political action.

2. Gompers and the leaders of the American Federation of Labor were the champions of this doctrine and tactic.

3. The Socialists, on the other hand, concentrated on committing the American Federation of Labor to independent political action.

4. In 1886, they succeeded, with the cooperation of the non-Socialist political element in securing an endorsement of the various independent political movements. But in 1889 the American Federation of Labor rejected a resolution for the formation of an independent political party.

5 The struggle now became bitter between the Socialists and Gompers. Through their persistence, the Socialists in 1894 put through a political platform and resolutions calling for an independent political party.

6. Next year, Gompers and the leaders of the International unions turned the tables. Some of the prominent Socialists, led by Daniel DeLeon, became disheartened and left the Federation to organize independent unions that would endorse Socialism and the Socialist Labor Party. Those that remained were naturally much weakened.

VI.

1. The American Federation of Labor set out at first on a purely lobbying program.

2. It did not succeed in getting results through this procedure, and embarked in 1904 upon the policy of "reward your friends and punish your enemies", by endorsing candidates of the Republican and Democratic parties favorable to Labor, and by encouraging union men to stand for office.

3. As a result of this new policy, Gompers and a committee appeared before the platform committee of the Republican convention. Receiving little response, they turned to the Democrats. The latter adopted several planks favorable to Labor.

4. Since then, and up to the last presidential election, the American Federation of Labor has endorsed and campaigned for the Democratic Party nationally, but has endorsed Democrats and Republicans for Federal and State offices.

VII.

1. That element of the Socialists which opposed abandoning the American Federation of Labor organized the Socialist Party in 1901.

2. They set up the principle of not interfering with the internal affairs of the trade unions, but of trying to convert them to Socialism.

3. Up to the war they made fair headway, but with the war the Socialists and radicals divided into factions, and have been kept too busy fighting each other to carry on their propaganda work.

4. On the other hand, the non-partisan political policy of the American Federation of Labor has introduced a variety of

political opinions among the workers, so that they do not act as a unit on the political field as they do on the economic field.

5. At present, there is chaos and confusion in the political realm of the Labor Movement.

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5. FORM AND STRUCTURE OF UNIONS

I.

1. Social movements must have organization to coordinate their activities and make them effective as well as to discipline the participants.

2. The effectiveness of unions depends to a large extent upon their form and structure. Whether workers should be organized on craft, trade or industrial lines has been the bone of contention in the Labor Movement since its inception.

3. This subject can be most intelligently approached by tracing historically the development of form and structure, and then analyzing the various types in existence at present.

II.

1. The first unions in this country were formed on craft lines by handicraftsmen.

2. With the introduction of machinery and division of labor, culminating in the modern factory, the efficiency of craft unionism began to be questioned. Nearly all unions widened their jurisdiction and admitted semi-skilled workers to membership. A few admitted the unskilled.

III.

1. Much confusion prevailed over form and structure up to the formation of the American Federation of Labor. Previous thereto, craft, industrial and "One Big Union" forms operated side by side.

2. This confusion reached its height in the Knights of Labor, a conglomerate body including organizations of all the discontented whether they were merchants, farmers or workers.

3. Soon two ideas crystallized as to form and structure: One element believed that all members irrespective of craft, trade or calling, belong to the same union, and that their affairs should be subjected to the control of the central organization. The other element favored segregation on craft and trade lines, with trade autonomy for each unit. This group consisted largely of wage workers.

IV.

1. Because of the "One Big Union" element which prevailed, the trade union element withdrew and joined the American Federation of Labor. Structurally, this organization believes in international craft or trade unions, with exclusive control over all workers of the trade or craft, and with complete autonomy over their internal affairs.

2. With a few exceptions the prevailing union type at present is the trade rather than the craft union. This was brought about by amalgamations and paralleled the development of large-scale production.

V.

1. With the trustification of industry another step was taken. Unions claiming jurisdiction over workers in trustified industries, joined to carry on organizing campaigns, strikes and bargaining jointly.

2. This is how the iron and steel, packing, railroad, shipbuilding and other trustified industries were organized.

3. To meet the new need, the American Federation of Labor created a Building Trades, Metal Trades, Mining and Railway Employes Department.

4. These intercraft federations and departments are intended to enable trade and craft unions to act as a unit in each industry.

5. They differ from industrial unions in that it remains optional with each union to join or refrain from joining the other unions in the industry, and it can withdraw whenever it sees fit.

6. This form of autonomy has often prevented united action, and has weakened the efforts of the remaining unions.

VI.

1. At present the advocates of industrial unionism agitate indiscriminately for two types of industrial unions.

2. One form would consist of all the workers employed by a specific business unit, as workers employed by railroads or iron and steel mills.

3. The second type would organize all workers engaged on a specific kind of material as metal trades, clothing and wearing apparel trades, etc.

4. Industrial unionism is inevitable if trustified industries are to be organized. The present makeshifts have proved ineffective. But it would behoove the advocates of industrial unionists to study carefully the obstacles and problems confronting them.

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6. THE I. W. W. AND DUAL UNIONISM

I.

1. Just as the American Federation of Labor was the rival of the Knights of Labor, it in turn has had to contend with opponents.

2. The attempt to organize internationals in opposition to those affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, or a combination of unions to replace the Federation itself, is popularly known as "dual unionism."

II.

1. Some of the dual unions do not differ in philosophy and tactics from the American Federation of Labor unions. They were founded largely on account of dissatisfaction with the leaders of the old union, because of rivalry between leaders, etc.

2. Dual unions of this nature are apt to be socialistic and to favor industrial unionism. But they believe in collective bargaining and trade agreements, trade autonomy, strike funds, benefit features and other practices common to either radical or conservative unions within the American Federation of Labor.

III.

1. Another element has organized dual unions to replace the American Federation of Labor, because it differs fundamentally on policies, tactics and philosophies.

2. Several such organizations have challenged the leadership of the American Federation of Labor during its existence.

3. The I. W. W. is the most outstanding. It took an uncompromising position against collective barganing and trade agreements, strike funds, benefit features and other "opportunistic and immediate demands" to improve the conditions of the workers. It set out to stress ultimate aims to be secured through highly centralized and non-autonomous industrial unions and departments and the general strike.

IV.

1. In its attempt to win over unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor it made little headway.

2. Its chief success lay in following up failures of the American Federation of Labor Unions.

a. A number of American Federation of Labor unions failed in organizing trustified industries which employed large numbers of unskilled and immigrant workers.

b. Likewise, in a number of instances the leaders of American Federation of Labor Unions did not know how to reach the immigrant workers, or could not hold their confidence.

3. On the other hand, the I. W. W. made a special effort to reach these workers. It distributed its propaganda in their languages, and developed organizers from the more alert of the various immigrant groups; and in this manner it succeeded in advertising itself among these immigrant and unskilled workers, winning their confidence and becoming their mentor.

4. Naturally when the working conditions of these workers became unbearable and they spontaneously joined in a strike, they turned to the I. W. W. for leadership.

5. Thus, in addition to carrying on its propaganda the I. W. W. also supplied leadership to unorganized workers during strikes.

6. Through its propaganda the I. W. W. also influenced many active and intelligent radicals to abandon the American Federation of Labor Unions.

V.

1. As a propaganda organization the I. W. W. has succeeded in influencing large masses of workers, especially unskilled and immigrant workers in trustified industries, and American migratory workers in the West.

2. Through its propaganda activities it has popularized radical trade unionism, and anti-American Federation of Labor sentiment.

VI.

1. As an economic organization it has proved a failure. Outside of supplying leadership during spontaneous strikes, aiding dissatisfied elements of the American Federaton of Labor unions, and keeping migratory workers of the West together, it has confined its activities to propaganda work.

1. a. It failed to establish stable economic organizations in industries where its counsel and leadership was accepted;

b. It discouraged accumulation of funds for financing strikes and routine activities;

c. It did not aid local leaders to perpetuate unions founded during strikes so as to see that the condition won by those strikes were not taken away from the workers after returning to work;

d. It did not supply counsel and guidance during normal times.

VII.

1. As many of the local leaders began to acquire experience and to familiarize themselves with conditions elsewhere, they realized the shortcomings of the I. W. W.

2. These leaders counselled and secured the repudiation of the I. W. W. and the formation instead of independent unions.

3. Several unions were organized, retaining belief in the ultimate abolition of capitalism, but also aiming to establish strong and stable unions that will better existing conditions and protect immediate interests of the workers.

4. Another element of the former I. W. W. adherents is even opposed to independent unions, and is urging the radicals to join the American Federation of Labor unions in order to "bore from within" and capture these unions.

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7. THE ROLE OF THE IMMIGRANT IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT

I.

1. The American Labor Movement has been considerably influenced by the European labor movements.

2. What might be called an indigenous labor movement functioned in the early history of the Country.

3. But the late thirties mark the beginning of a new mass immigration from three sources in the following importance:

Ireland, Germany and England.

4. Nor were these immigrants received any more cordially than the more recent immigrants. Even the English, although descended from the same stock as the Americans, were unwelcome.

II.

1. But these sturdy immigrants were undaunted and immediately proceeded on their own initiative to adapt themselves to their new surroundings.

2. The English immigrant workers, having trades, knowing the language and customs, and having had experience in the labor movement at home, soon became an influential part of the American labor movement.

a. Because of their influence and the convictions, borne of bitter experience, of such young immigrant leaders as Adolph Strasser andSamuel Gompers, the English speaking branch of the American Labor Movement copied after the British model of trade unionism; now known as "pure and simple" unionism.

3. The Irish, eminating from the backward, agricultural commutities possessing neither trades nor previous contact with the labor movement, became the common laborers of the country.

a. Gradually their children advanced up the rungs of the industrial ladder becoming the skilled workers.

b. And because of their political predelictions they also became the leaders of the American labor movement.

c. Not having acquired a social philosophy in the country of theid origin they naturally accepted the news current in the labor movement.

4. The Germans also did not wait for assistance but set about to adapt themselves to the new conditions. Unlike the Irish a large number came from industrial centers and were trained workers. And like the English they had been part of a virile labor movement.

a. They differed from the English in that they sponsored radical and socialist unionism and independent working class political action.

b. The German mass immigration also included experienced labor leaders and intellectuals who were thoroughly familiar with the theoretical and practical aspirations of the labor movement.

c. Having had experience in the fatherland and finding themselves the controlling factor in many unorganized industrial centers and trades they naturally set about to found their own unions, labor press and other educational auxiliaries as well as their own political or socialist clubs.

III.

1. Thus this country witnessed the simultaneous development of an English speaking labor movement featuring pure and simple unionism, and a German speaking labor movement sponsoring industrial and radical unionism, and independent working class and socialist political action.

2. Clashing over ideologies these parallel movements generally cooperated in practical matters.

IV.

1. The recent immigration has in many respects repeated the course of the early immigration.

2. The bulk of the Southern and Eastern European immigration comes from agricultural districts, is of peasant stock and Catholic. They resemble the Irish with the additional handicap of speaking strange tongues.

3. Because of their helplessness they at first became the prey of mercenary fellow countrymen and greedy employers. Unacquainted with modern industry and not knowing anything about labor organization they remained unorganized until the existing unions, of which the United Mine Workers and the I. W. W. are the most notable examples, offered them a helping hand.

a. Once they became schooled in the method of organized labor they remained its staunchest and most progressive adherents. At present they are the backbone of most of the unions in such basic industries as mining, metal branches, railroad shops, meat packing, wood working, textiles, etc.

At first these immigrant workers unquestioningly followed the leaders of the unions which organized them. But after having become orientated they began to assert themselves through their own leaders and press.

5. In the "pure and simple" unions, they generally aligned themselves with those English speaking workers who hold that their unions should supplement their activities for the betterment of immediate conditions with support of causes that advocate the attainment of a new social order.

6. On the other hand the immigrant workers that were led by the I. W. W. abandoned it after a few years of practical experience. Their disappointment in the I. W. W. was not because of its radicalism, which had captivated their imagination, and to which they subscribed wholeheartedly.

7. On the contrary they disapproved of its lack of sympathy for practical trade union policies and its scorn for stable and permanent unions that would protect and further the immediate interests of its members while propagating for the overthrow of the wage system.

8. As a result these immigrant workers founded unions independent of both the I. W. W. and the A. F. of L.

V.

1. Among the recent immigrants several races, particularly the Jews, closely resemble the Germans. While not coming entirely from industrial centers and practicing skilled trades, the Jews came largely from commercial centers where they had contact with radical political movements. A large number of their intellectuals possessed a theoretical and practical knowledge of the world labor movements.

2. Hence when the Jewish immigrant workers found themselves in unorganized trades and industries in this country, as in the needle trades, they did not long remain a helpless prey of either mercenary fellow country men or greedy employers.

3. Like the Germans, they set about to organize their own labor movement with its unions, press, benefit societies, cooperatives and propaganda clubs.

4. Their movement parallels, but at the same time is an integral part of the American Labor Movement. Where national unions existed the Jewish workers upon organizing themselves sought affiliation. Where no national unions existed, or the existing national unions proved unsympathetic, the Jewish workers founded their own national unions, as witness: The International Ladies' Garment Workers Union; the Cloth, Hat, Cap, and Millinery Workers International Union; International Fur Workers Union, and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America.

VI.

1. But these so-called Jewish needle trades unions are really a composite of southern and eastern European races. — The most important being the Italians, Poles, Bohemians and Lithuanians.

2. Indeed, within recent years the Italian immigrant workers have manifested as keen and intelligent an insight in the labor movement as the Germans and Jews. And the other races are rapidly assuming their full share of responsibility in the conducts of the affairs of the unions.

VII.

1. Nor have these needle trades unions been content with merely imitating the progressive German and French speaking labor movement.

2. In addition to practicing the progressive policies of unionism, socialism and cooperation they have been the pioneers in launching and imitating many vital activities.

a. They were the first to appreciate the significance of Workers' Education in which the International Ladies Garment Workers Union was the pioneer.

b. These unions were among the first to appreciate the importance of research and investigation as a basis for effective and intelligent action.

c. They were the first to improve on the old collective bargaining practices by introducing methods now characterized as the first steps in constitutionalism in industry. This consists of a form of machinery functioning continuously and giving the workers an equal voice with the employer in the administration of working conditions.

d. To the needle trades unions also goes the credit of being the first to wage successful campaigns for the 44 hour week.

e. At present these unions are leading in the attempt to stabilize industry and reduce unemployment to a minimum, through the pressure of unemployment insurance financed by the industry.

f. These needle trades unions are also equaling the efforts of the remainder of the labor movement in organizing labor banks so as to use the financial resources of the workers in controlling credit in the interests of labor.

g. And now the needle trades workers are turning their attention to the organization of the American workers in their trades, while this is a difficult task, their experience thus far seems to indicate that they will master it as they have other difficult undertakings.

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8. THE INTELLECTUAL IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT

I.

In the Labor Movement the term intellectual is used to designate those persons whose economic interest and livelihood lie, for the time being, in any direction other than that of wages derived from their own annual work.

II.

More recently, the term has been restricted to exclude so-called brain workers, who do not earn their livelihood by manual work, such as teachers, actors, scientific workers, etc. These have organized their unions on the same lines as other workers, and have thereby become a part of the Labor Movement, subject to the discipline of their union.

III.

With this qualification, the word intellectual applies to persons who have an interest in the Labor Movement but are not necessarily subject to the discipline of the organizations composing the Labor Movement. Most of the intellectuals have come from the following groups:

a. Business men and capitalists with a philanthropic or political turn of mind.
b. Professional men, especially lawyers, and editors, and more recently educators, economists, accountants, engineers, medical men, etc.
c. Speculative philosophers and reformers.
d. A number began as union men and workers and later acquired a profession or business, but retained their interest in the Labor Movement.

IV.

Historically, the intellectual has been with the Labor Movement from its very inception. As early as 1827, intellectuals like Robert Owen and Francis Wright allied themselves with the economic, political and cooperative movement of the workers.

V.

The objective of the early intellectuals was to direct the workers away from their interests as a class, and to lead them towards affiliation with other classes.

a. Later the intellectuals became the most important advocates of Socialist and class conscious philosophies and concentrated their energies in spreading revolutionary ideas in the Labor Movement.
b. Few intellectuals ever became actual leaders in trade unions.
c. A good number of them have taken an important part in the educational, political and cooperative movements.

d. In Europe intellectuals have also played an important role in the trade union movement.

VI.

Unfortunately, the conduct of an element among the intellectuals has made the Labor Movement suspicious and antagonistic towards them.

a. Since some of them had independent income, it was not necessary for them to seek a responsible position as a means of livelihood. Being unanchored, they became irresponsible and erratic—free lances.
b. They assumed a dictotorial attitude of prophets, instead of one of individuals in an integral movement.
c. The self-centered element has contributed considerably to the discrediting of the intellectuals with the Labor Movement.

VII.

In the meantime, a new group of intellectuals aligned themselves with the Labor Movement.

a. They consist of technically trained professionals, such as economists, statisticians, accountants, engineers, health authorities, educators, etc., who instead of considering themselves leaders, aim to supplement the leaders in the Labor Movement by supplying them with technical counsel and data.
b. These technicians are rendering yeomen service to organized labor in supplying data and counsel in connection with the various intricate undertakings and activities of the Labor Movement.

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9. THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

I.

1. The American Federation of Labor is the predecessor of a number of national organizations of unions.
2. The labor movement was not long in existence before it was realized that all unions have national interests in common. With this feeling plans were evolved for national organization of existing unions.

II.

1. The first national federation of trade unions was founded in 1835, less than ten years following the formation of the first city centrals and beginning of the labor movement.

2. This federation was called the National Trades' Union and was organized on different principals than the American Federation of Labor.

3. It was composed of city centrals over whose action it had considerable control to the extent of even requiring them to contribute to a national strike fund.

4. But the labor movement was still too unstable for permanent organization so that the National Trades' Union was short lived.

III.

1. The spirit for national organization of unions persisted, however, so that thenceforth attempts were made periodically.

1. Of these the most substantial and far-reaching was the Knights of Labor. It was also the immediate predecessor of the American Federation of Labor.

3. Founded in 1869 as a secret organization by a union of Garment Cutters in Philadelphia, it at first struggled along without a formal national organization.

4. It merely interested detached unions in assuming its name and in forming local district assemblies or what are now called central labor unions.

5. By 1876 the need for a national organization again came to the surface and the Knights of Labor was formed on a national scale.

6. At first it grew slowly in membership and floundered considerably in its aims and politics, but gradually it became articulate and experienced a phenomenal increase in membership.

IV.

1. In the course of the struggle between a variety of conflicting elements certain policies came into the ascendency.

2. Philosophically it was middle-class, believing in cooperation and political action that would usher in a society of self-employed, small property owners.

3. Economically it was grudgingly committed to unions, strikes, boycotts and the label. But none of the present-day policies that have made trade union action effective and successful received serious consideration even by those who thought of them.

4. Governmentally the Knights of Labor was a highly centralized organization, virtually giving absolute and dictatorial power to its higher officials and General Executve Board.

a. Its General Executive Board could order and call off strikes of any of its subordinate units.

b. It controlled the funds and other activities of its affiliated bodies.

c. This policy more than any other led to its final collapse.

d. It required more than human intelligence to minutely supervise and direct the affairs of the entire Labor Movement from one central headquarters and by a handful of ordinary men.

V.

1. The American Federation of Labor built upon the mistakes of the Knights of Labor, and its predecessors. Nevertheless it floundered about for a short period before it settled on its present course.

2. From 1881 to 1886 it was known as the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada.

3. Its exclusive aim then was to further the legislative interest of organized Labor.

4. Since 1886 it has reversed its position completely. Now it regards attending to the legislative interest of Labor as one of its activities and considers its chief object to further trade unionism or economic organization of the workers.

5. With this aim in view it set out to aid its affiliated unions in

a. Organizing their trades.

b. Encouraging organization among the unorganized.

c. Fostering concerted action in matters that transcend the interests of any one trade.

6. Its chief activity is centered at present on the latter; namely, in attending to matters that concern organized Labor in common as

a. Advertising the union label and boycotts.

b. Counteracting the "open shop" movement.

c. Safeguarding the interests of Labor in the use of injunctions in the labor disputes.

d. Voicing organized Labor's aspirations and aims.

7. Philosophically the American Federation of Labor is opportunistic and protectionistic.

a. It accepts the wage system and believes workers should organize into trade unions and otherwise mass their strength in order to protect their interests as wage workers.

b. It considers aspirations to abolish the wage system as a mere day dream and that the immediate interest of the workers is its prime concern.

8. a. Tactically it advocates concentration upon trade union or economic action, being of the opinion that the worker's strength rests in his power to withhold his labor and his patronage.

b. Regarding politics as inconsequential and fraught with many pitfalls it eschews independent political action. It feels that the little Labor wants from the Government can best be obtained by non-partisan action, now popularly known as "Reward your friends and punish your enemies" policy.

c. This is based on the theory that in a country with two political parties it can exercise greater influence by attempting to hold "the balance of power" in elections.

d. Since it believes primarily in trade union action, its legislative or political demands are largely of a negative nature.

1. Removing restrictions or encroachments of Governmental agencies upon its trade union activities. as interference of the courts in strikes and boycotts, and legislative enactments regulating or prohibiting strikes, as the Kansas Industrial Courts Act.
2. Restricting immigration so as not to flood the Labor market with workers of a lower standard of living.

e. Likewise, believing that the workers should rely chiefly upon their economic power it opposes positive legislation to improve their condition. They should not be taught to rely on government or any other agency for the betterment of working conditions.

1. It has consistently opposed all forms of social insurance, even workingmen's compensation, as well as old age pension, health insurance, etc.

VI.

1. Within recent years the position of the American Federation of Labor has been gradually modified so that it is now demanding positive legislation that will supplement union effort in the betterment of the conditions of the workers and of the public.

2. It favors workmen's compensation legislation, even having gone on record for a State monopoly of accident insurance.

3. It has also endorsed Government ownership of railroads after a persistent and bitter struggle led by the unions affiliated with the Railway Employes Department.

4. This action was later supplemented by a blanket declaration for industrial democracy which presupposes some form of socialization of at least basic industries.

5. At the Portland Convention (1923) the American Federation of Labor also declared more specifically that industrial democracy should parallel political democracy, indicating that it favors a future system of society in which labor will have a definite voice in the control and management of industry.

6. At this convention it also declared for Government ownership and operation of the contemplated super-power development in order to prevent private interests from exploiting this project for personal gain.

7. Simultaneous with this modification of its position the American Federation of Labor has begun to avail itself of the services of technicians as engineers, economists, hygienists, etc., evidently realizing that no great social movement can effectively further its cause without technical aid.

8. At the same time it has also become interested in workers' education by officially endorsing and participating in the conduct of the Workers' Education Bureau of America.

VII.

1. A rather powerful minority in the Federation composed of Socialists and other advocates of independent political action have made powerful presentation of their views at Federation Conventions.

2. These elements also exercise considerable influence in a number of the international unions, as well as state federations and city centrals.

3. The Communist element is active almost entirely in the subsidiary units exercising practically no positive influence in Federation conventions and politcs.

VIII.

1. Tactically the American Federation of Labor believes that trade union aims of improving living and working conditions should be furthered through collective bargaining and trade agreements.

2. It holds that the individual worker is no match against his bargaining specialist employer, and workers should therefore bargain collectively through their union.

3. The trade agreement is the instrument for recording conditions agreed upon in the course of collective bargaining. Although without legal sanction it is invariably more rigidly adhered to then the usual contract enforceable at law. This is, of course, essential in order to maintain the good will and faith without which the collective bargaining relationship is valueless.

IX.

1. Constitutionally, the American Federation of Labor is a loose federation of autonomous and international craft, trade and industrial unions.

2. Each union has exclusive jurisdiction over a certain class of workers upon which no other national union must encroach. Likewise, each national union has absolute autonomy to conduct its internal affairs without outside interference by the Federation or any other national union.

3. Consequently, while the majority of the affiliated unions are conservative, a number are Socialist or radical unions. Sim-

ilarly, although the prevailing opinion is for craft unionism, a number of the unions are industrial or semi-industral in structure.

X.

1. Structurally, the dominant unit in the Federation is the national or international union. Not only has it complete autonomy but the voting strength of the international unions is based on membership whereas the other units as state federations, city centrals and departments have only one vote each irrespective of size of membership.

2. State federations and city centrals are directly accountable to the American Federation of Labor and are designed to duplicate the activities of the Federation in their respective geographic areas. They further the political interest of the trade union movement and aid in making their economic activities a success by helpng in organizing workers in conducting strikes and in making the boycott and union label effective.

3. With the growth of large scale and trustified industry, industrial departments were created. Their function is to coordinate and further concerted action of the various unions, having members in a particular industry, as railroad, building, metal trades. Each union, however, still retains complete autonomy being at liberty to withdraw or to decline to abide by the decision of the other unions composing the department.

XI.

1. The American Federation of Labor has the distinction of being the first national federation of unions in this country to withstand recurrent storms and stress periods of depression. Past federations disappeared in a few years largely because the unions could not weather periods of depression.

2. The Federation and practically all the unions affiliated with it have enjoyed a continuous existence since their inception. The membership has steadily increased although it has receded from the peak at intervals.

3. The present period of depression has cut into its membership most heavily, the unions affiliated with the Federation having lost over half the membership gained during the prosperity period of the war.

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Conclusion

THE FUTURE OF TRADE UNION ACTION

It is generally conceded that the union or economic organization is the center and foundation of the Labor Movement. All other activities are regarded as subordinate and dependent upon it. Historically this concept was contested, leading to bitter controversy and disastrous division. But now all factions in the Labor Movement accept the proposition that all other activities of the Labor Movement must center around the union. A large element has interpreted this thought as meaning that the Labor Movement should confine itself exclusively to the immediate betterment of Labor through union or economic action. A small group believe that even the overthrow of the wage system can be accomplished by direct action. This has proved a fatal mistake. Most unions that have followed this narrow interpretation are the least effective, if not the decaying portions of the Labor Movement. Just as life cannot be a "one track affair," so the Labor Movement must interest itself in all vital phases of human endeavor. Workers' Education, a wide-awake Labor press, workers' participation in management, nationalization of basic industries, independent political action, and a new social order, must also be the intelligent concern of the American Labor Movement. The contention that these additional interests will dissipate the energy of unions is wholly unfounded. On the contrary, a close scrutiny will reveal that the most successful and constructively militant unions are those that manifest this broader social interest in the hopes and aspirations of the Labor Movement.

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